

"Tiny, delicate fishbones..."

PEGGY LIN DUTHIE

Some January days, every scrap of sky
sparkles needle-sharp blue and clean
and bruises us with its very brightness.

Some February days, the clouds are thick
as inchoate prayers and unripe sap.

Some days in March, centaurs canter
into the meadows with wind-chewed manes
and the woozy snouts of lambkins.

Some April days, their hoofprints vanish,
scoured by the soft, inexorable rain.

Some days in May, the bears wear tiaras,
padding across the night more silver
than all of the living coals of fish.

Some days in June, the sky glows mute
and pliant as butter anticipating bread.

Some July days, every stray cloud
hovers over the panting of the lake.
Beavers scrape out fat from sagebrush.

Some August days, the tops of the trees
are seared in sun-heat but still ache green.

Some September days, the sky is an onion
breeding a haze of meaningless tears,
thickening the skins to which it clings.

Some October days, the arc of heaven
is gilded with the holy ghost of laughter.

Some November days, the air is pewter.
The body craves polish. The pulse plods on,
sodden as the leaves on unclaimed lots.

Some December days, the smoke that rises up
is flecked with a healthy ravening for grace.

"...of clouds in the sky." – Thomas Merton, 9/12/64